



ABN E-NEWS

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Alabama Board of Nursing
770 Washington Avenue
Suite 250
Montgomery, Alabama 36104
(334) 293-5200
(800) 656-5318
Fax: (334) 293-5201
www.abn.alabama.gov

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 303900
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-3900

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License Cards Will Be Discontinued Effective January 1

Peggy Sellers Benson, RN, MSHA, MSN, NE-BC

As many of you know, recent reports of counterfeit license cards and verifications have led the Board to discontinue issuing license cards, as well as our security paper approval cards for Advanced Practice Nurses, after 2015 LPN Renewal closes on December 31, 2015. I would like to take a few moments to explain the process going forward.

First, I want to make clear that this was not an easy decision for us, as we understand the value we nurses place on the cards, which serve as a physical reminder of all the hours of hard work we put in pursuing our dreams of entry into America's most respected profession. However, the Members of the Board felt that they had no choice, as our central mission of public protection is threatened by those few individuals who choose to violate the law and impersonate duly-licensed nurses.

It is important to note that the license cards themselves have never served as your actual license. So long as you comply with the law and renew on time, your license is valid, with or without a plastic card to prove it. Likewise, those nurses who do not maintain a license in good standing cannot hold themselves out as RNs or LPNs based on hanging onto the cards.

As much as we might enjoy having the cards, as long as verification has been available by request or through the ABN Subscription Service, primary source verification has been the standard for employers and the public to ensure that a nurse's license is valid and unencumbered. Discontinuing the cards will simply require anyone seeking to verify a license to continue doing as they should have all along – request verification through the ABN website or subscribe to the Subscription Service, a service which we are expanding for the benefit of all nurses, employers, and, above all, Alabama's patient population.

Moving forward, we will replace the license cards with an individualized Continuing Education (CE) card for each nurse, allowing CE to be recorded exactly as it currently is, by swiping the card's magnetic strip. This process will not change at all, with the small exception that the CE card will not expire and will remain with the nurse, regardless of the validity of the license itself.

Finally, we will begin issuing a Certificate of Licensure to each licensed nurse and a Certificate of Approval to each Advanced Practice Nurse. Your license must still be verified through the Board, but these should serve as a reminder of everything you put into becoming a member of our hallowed profession.

Again, this was not an easy decision, but a necessary one. I want to thank you all in advance as we move forward with this major transition at the Alabama Board of Nursing.

APN Corner
News and Notes on
Advanced Practice Nursing

- In September, the Board appointed Natalie R. Baker, DNP, CRNP, and ABN Board Member, to a three-year term on the Joint Committee for Advanced Practice Nursing. Dr. Baker is the Coordinator of the Adult/Gerontology Primary Nurse Practitioner specialty track at the UAB School of Nursing and practices in long-term care in Athens. She has served as a Board Member since January 2015.
- Carol Stewart, MSN, CRNP, will serve as Chair of the Joint Committee for the current term, October 2015 -September 2016. The office of Chairperson alternates between a physician member and nurse member for a one-year term. Ms. Stewart was a Member of the ABN from 2011 to 2014, and served as ABN Vice President in 2012-2013. The ABN appointed Ms. Stewart to the Joint Committee in October 2011 to fill the unexpired term of the previous CRNP member and re-appointed her in September 2013 to a full three-year term.
- Melissa Hatter, MSN, RN, CNM, is the midwife member on the Joint Committee. Her appointment runs through September 2017.

New Continuing Education (CE) Course Offerings

We have posted two new CE courses related to Advanced Practice Nursing and the revised Collaborative Practice regulations on www.abn.alabama.gov, under "CE Online Course Offerings." These courses provide about 2.7 contact hours Nursing CE credit and cover ABN Administrative Code Chapters 610-X-5 for CRNPs and CNMs and 610-X-9 for CRNAs and CNSs. The [August 2015 Edition](#) of the ABN Newsletter included a summary of the revised rules for CRNPs and CNMs in collaborative practice that took effect August 6, 2015.

ABN Nursing Staff Changes

Peggy Sellers Benson, RN, MSHA, MSN, NE-BC

As many of you know, 2015 has seen a great deal of change at ABN, as we continue to move forward with our New Direction for nursing regulation in Alabama. Toward that end, I wanted to share a number of recent and upcoming changes to our professional nursing staff.

Charlene B. Cotton, MSN, RN, is retiring from the position of Nurse Consultant for Advanced Practice Nursing, effective December 31. Charlene has been in this position since 1999 and we will greatly miss her historical perspective on APN policy. Please join us in thanking Charlene for her years of dedicated service to ABN and to our profession and wishing her a long and happy retirement.

Dawn Daniel, MSN, RN, will be moving from her current position as Director of Probation to take over Charlene's role as APN Nurse Consultant. Dawn has been with ABN since 2010 and previously practiced as a Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (CRNP) prior to her retirement from the United States Air Force.

LaDonna Patton, MSN, RN, CEN, who has served as a Nurse Consultant in the legal division since 2009, is taking over as the Director for the Center of Nursing/Continuing Education. This is a newly-created position that will focus on establishing a Center for Nursing and development of on-line Continuing Education programs for licensees.

Cathy Boden, RN, MSN, who has been a Nurse Consultant in the legal division with ABN since 2002, is moving to the position of Director of Compliance/Probation, where she will continue to oversee complaint investigations and supervise the ABN's three Compliance (formerly legal) Nurse Consultants — **Angela E. Kennedy**, RN, MSN, JD, **Abby Migliore**, RN, MSN, and **Melanie Rightmyer**, DNP, RN.

Mary Ed Davis, DNP, MSN, RN, Director, Voluntary Disciplinary Alternative Program (VDAP), **Joyce D. Jeter**, MSN, RN (Practice), and **Debra Lett**, PhD, MSN, MPA, RN (Education) will continue to do their usual excellent jobs in their current roles.

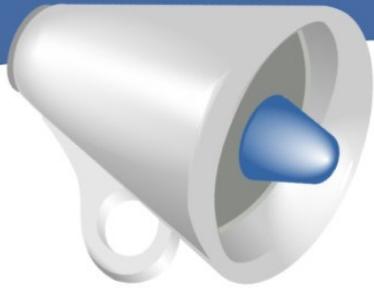
Questions Remain Regarding the New Compact

Peggy Sellers Benson, RN, MSHA, MSN, NE-BC

The recent proposal for a new Nurse Licensure Compact has been a popular topic of conversation among nurses and I'd like to take this opportunity to share a number of concerns that the ABN has identified in reviewing the new Compact documents. These concerns have led us to take a "wait and see" approach before deciding what course of action is best for the state of Alabama as we consider moving forward with implementation of the Compact for LPNs and RNs, as well as the separate Compact for Advanced Practice Nursing. Among our concerns are the following:

- The new Compact, as presently written, would require the creation of two new oversight agencies, to be located in either Washington, DC, or Chicago, IL [headquarters of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN)]. The new documents do not address vital logistical questions, including staffing requirements and agency organization. Additionally, beyond a ten-year partial support plan of \$500,000.00 annually from NCSBN, no revenue stream has been identified to fund the two agencies. While \$500,000.00 is a substantial sum, it falls far short of the level of funding that would be required to sustain these agencies. Inevitably, the funding gap would have to be filled by participating states and their licensees.
- The new Compact provides for each of the new agencies to assess an annual fee to each Board to cover operating expenses. Neither a budget nor a fee structure has been proposed for these agencies, so we have no way of knowing how this would affect Alabama, but it obviously would be considerably more than the \$6,000.00 annual fee assessed to Boards that participate in the current Compact, as the costs of maintaining the two agencies in either Washington or Chicago would be huge.
- The new Compact language would provide for rule changes to be made by simple one-vote majorities and these changes would take effect regardless of Alabama's position on them.
- Participants in the Voluntary Disciplinary Alternative Program (VDAP) would have to be identified between the states, despite the fact that the program, as presently constituted, is confidential.
- No bylaws have been drafted for the Compact, so we have no way of knowing how these would affect our licensees or the public.
- The proposal for the new Compact requires the Alabama Legislature to adopt the Compact legislation without a single word change from the proposal. It would be extraordinary to expect our Legislature to surrender its authority to customize a law to accommodate the specific needs and political realities of Alabama.
- Joining the Compact would cost Alabama approximately \$1.2 million in revenues from licensure, verification, and endorsement fees, before any assessment is even considered.
- No determination has been made as to how the Compact would address differences between the states in areas such as Collaborative or Independent Practice for Advanced Practice Nurses.

We are not alone in questioning the present course of the Compact. Seventeen other Boards of Nursing either declined to endorse, abstained from endorsing, or were absent when the vote was held. So it remains to be seen whether or not state boards of nursing and their licensees, governors, and legislatures will be willing to pass the new Compact with so many unanswered questions. For now, the ABN has decided that it would be a gross dereliction of duty to endorse the Compact until we have considerably more clarity on the issues identified above, as well as any new concerns that may arise as the Compact is further defined. If you have any comments you would like to share, please feel free to contact us at abn@abn.alabama.gov.



Attention LPNs

There's a new section to the LPN Renewal Survey this year...

You will notice a new section to your 2015 LPN Renewal survey. This 31 question survey will only take 5-10 minutes of your time and will greatly benefit nurses like you.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is the new section on LPN licensing survey?

The voluntary section of questions at the end of the LPN renewal survey is a standardized tool that will help the Board of Nursing collect information about the LPN workforce.

Why does the Board need this information?

Right now, Alabama currently lacks nursing workforce data needed to influence policy; enhance diversity; forecast the nursing workforce supply and demand, including nursing education program planning; forecast for disaster planning; or identify nursing shortage areas versus overly saturated areas within the state. This is just a short list of reasons why this information is important to nurses and the public.

What are you going to do with this data?

The Board of Nursing is working with the Alabama Health Action Coalition (AL-HAC) to collect this information and publicize the survey's findings to public. Your response to this survey is critical for us to better plan for a healthier Alabama.

Are my answers anonymous?

Yes.

Why should I answer this survey?

Answering this survey will help the Board answer important questions like:

Will Alabama have enough nurses in the future? How will retiring nurses affect this number?

Are there areas in Alabama where we need more nurses? Is there an area with an over-saturated supply of nurses?

Does the racial/ethnic, geographic and specialty of Alabama's nursing workforce match our population's health needs?

Who developed these questions?

The questions on this survey were developed by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing and the National Forum of Nursing Workforce Centers.

Will these questions be asked on the RN Renewal Survey in 2016?

Yes. A very similar list of voluntary, questions will be included in the 2016 RN Renewal Survey.

How often will I be asked these questions?

You should expect these questions to be asked during each license renewal period.



For those who have already completed the renewal survey, we thank you for your participation. For more information, visit:

www.al-hac.org

Honoring The Nursing Profession

As our Centennial year draws to a close, the Alabama Board of Nursing thanks the many thousands of Alabama nurses who have contributed to patient care over the past 100 years. It is often said that nursing is our nation's most respected profession, but it is only we, the nurses, who can truly appreciate the countless hours of hard work it takes not just to enter this hallowed field, but also to maintain our high professional standards. Each nurse in Alabama has demonstrated through the past 100 years the dedication, drive, and tenacity to forge ahead, plow new ground, establish new standards, and serve the public in a way that makes Alabama nurses stand out. You are the ones who have been there, succeeded, and made the difference.

Thank you,

Peggy S. Benson



LPN Renewal Reminder

Regular LPN Renewal began September 1 and ends November 30. Late Renewal will be available through the month of December, but incurs a \$150.00 Late Renewal fee, in addition to your license fee of \$75.00 and transaction fee of \$3.50, for a total of \$228.50. We strongly encourage you to complete your renewal during the Regular Renewal period, in order to avoid the unnecessary expense to you.